DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 627 FL 002 500

AUTHOR Levinsky, Frieda L.
TITLE Research on Language Methodology.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Articulation (Program), Basic Skills, Cultural Education, Grammar, Instructional Program Divisions, *Language Instruction, Language Laboratory Use, *Modern Languages, Programed Instruction, *Questionnaires, Second Language Learning, Surveys, *Teacher Attitudes, *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A compilation of the results of an attitudinal questionnaire completed by a 19-member panel of leading language instruction methodologists focuses on some 36 questions fundamental to both researchers and teachers. Topics include questions concerning the use of English in the classroom, teaching of grammar, transformation generative grammar, contrastive linguistics, course articulation, culture, vocabulary development, programed instruction, and the use of the language laboratory. An appendix contains specific suggestions by the panel on how language instruction can be improved at all levels. (RL)

ED053627

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE METHODOLOGY

Frieda L. Levinsky

5102 Du Bois Drive

San Diego, California 92117

The following summary includes basic research pertaining to the improvement of language methodology. The ratings herein are derived from a nineteen member nationally nominated panel of judges. The percentages are rounded off to the nearest number. Thirty-six questions derived from the questionnaire are the most fundamental for researchers interested in language methodology. For the purpose of brevity the highest percentages of each response are included in this summary.

1. Sixty-five percent of the panelists responding to the questions stated that when instructing a foreign language, English should be used none of the time.

2. Thirty-nine percent of the panelists stated that in order for students to be able to apply grammatical lessons from textbooks, English should be used, especially if language learning is to be facilitated.

FL002 500

3. Seventy-seven percent of the same panelists believed that in order for students to be able to apply correct linguistic items, grammatical speech patterns should be applied.

4. Forty-six percent of the total number of panelists stated that transformational grammar and contrastive linguistic items should be used for effective foreign language teaching during the next ten years.

5. Thirty-two percent of them agreed that there should be no translation in an introductory foreign language course.

6. Thirty-seven percent of the panelists agreed that students needed four years of foreign language instruction for optimal linguistic control, and the same percentage, thirty-seven percent, felt that six years would be the optimal number of years. However, the exact definition of linguistic control was not precisely spelled out.

7. Thirty-nine percent of the panelists felt that the minimum number of years necessary to study a foreign language was four years, in order for students to grasp some essential linguistic principles.

8. Twenty-nine percent of the panelists stated that children should begin to study a foreign language at the age of six.

9. Ninety-five percent of the panelists agreed that a person who has learned listening and speaking skills only, will need to have reading skills taught him directly.

10. Eighty-four percent of the panelists agreed that reading skills should be introduced after listening skills.

11. Fifty-nine percent of the panelists agreed that reading skills should be introduced as soon as possible.

12. Fifty-three percent of the panelists agreed that the order of importance should be listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

13. Ninety-four percent of the panelists agreed that cultural content should be taught for arousing curiosity.

14. Sixty-three percent of the panelists agreed that cultural content should be taught by:

a. selected readings

b. teachers' personal anecdotes

c. films and slides

15. Seventy-four percent of the same group of panelists stated that vocabulary should be taught in context.

"By ad hoc" cultural notes and slides or films at the beginning level, and by means of selected readings at the intermediate level, and at the advanced level.

Introductory reading may be presented even at the elementary level.

16. Ninety-four percent of the panelists stated that recent or previous language study at the high-school level had a definite positive effect on college success in the language study.

17. Eighty-eight percent of panelists believed that having had training in one language helped students to learn another.

18. The highest value ranking given by students in regard to language competancies which they hoped to attain was cultural knowledge.

19. When ranking the value that most foreign language teachers like to see high school students know about a foreign language, they replied cultural knowledge.

20. Of the group of panelists who repied they believed that the use of dictation in the classroom helped students to become proficient in any language learning aspect other than in the ability to take dictation. The following quotes were included by the panelists as substantiated proof of the type of helpful methods best useful for effective language learning results;

> "It helps students learn concord and agreement."
> "Attentive listening; correct writing."
> "Listening comprehension, structural awareness, spelling."

"Aural-oral skills."

"I suppose it helps with spelling and relating or associating sounds and words for reading and writing."

"It tests discriminatory powers needed in foreign-language learning, especially in the case of listening comprehension."

"If we learn to write by writing, this is one way to practice writing."

"Understanding, reading, writing, spelling."

"Listening and writing. The question is, however, does dictation develop these skills more effectively than other activities?"

"Spelling, grammar, comprehension."

21. Sixty precent of the panelists stated that teachers should use phonetic description and sound imitations. They also believed that speech articulation should be demonstrated with facial or other physiological descriptions.

22. Ninety-three percent of the panelists stated that foreign language departments and education departments should cooperatively work together for optimum linguistic proficiency results.

23. They also stressed cultural knowledge as the most significant reason for studying a foreign language in the United States.

24. Fifty-six percent of the panelists stated that an informal seating arrangement is most beneficial for a class size of thirty or fewer students.

25. Forty-seven percent of the same group of panelists agreed that from a pedagogical standpoint, the most desirable class size for beginning and intermediate

students should be from eleven to fifteen, for optimal learning outcomes.

26. Sixty-one percent of the same group of panelists stated that realistically speaking, present day high schools can expect to maintain between twenty-one and twenty-five students in beginning language classes.

27. Thirty-nine percent of the panelists stated that at the college level, from twenty-one to twenty-five students can be reasonably expected to be maintained at the beginning and intermediate levels.

28. Sixty-one percent of the panelists agreed that the language laboratory is useful as an additional teaching aid.

29. Eighty-nine percent of the panelists stated that teaching machines and general programmed instruction is interesting and worth experimenting with.

30. Seventy-two percent of the panelists stated that they believed that students would benefit from regular rather than intensive foreign language study.

31. Sixty-seven percent of the panelists stated that the best <u>single</u> predictor for college success in a foreign language are good foreign language aptitude tests.

32. Eighty-four percent of the same group of panelists stated that using the audio-lingual teaching method "turned the classroom into a place where the foreign language is talked, rather then talked about" is most

beneficial for optimum language learning success.

34. Forty-seven percent of the group interviewed suggested that poor learning results can be expected if students use parrot-like methods for foreign language learning outcomes. These students generally read only in their own book, but cannot meet new linguistic challenges.

35. The Appendix describes the most beneficial extra-curricular activities which involve students learning a foreign language.

Dr. Theodore Anderson (University of Texas - Austin, Texas):

"1. Summer travel abroad.
"2. Language houses.
"3. 'Foreign' room mates.
"4. Foreign movies.
"5. Foreign lectures.
"6. Foreign-language tables.
"7. Foreign-language reading lounge."

Miss Violet E. Bergquist (University of Illinois, Circle Campus - Chicago, Illinois):

"1. Study or trip to country where language is spoken.
"2. Student exchange.
"3. Active club program - use native students or people from the area.
"4. Movies of foreign country.
"5. Develop foreign climate or atmosphere within the classroom."

Dr. Emma M. Birkmaier (University of Minnesota - Minneapolis, Minnesota):

"1. Seeing many films.
"2. Attending foreign-language camps.
"3. American Field Service-type activities.
"4. Exchange correspondence and tapes as a class.
"5. Tutorial work of the upper classmen for the lower classmen.
"6. Good one-act plays for PTA.
"7. Exchanging programs with other schools."

Dr. Dwight L. Bolinger (Harvard University - Cambridge, Massachusetts):

"Contacts with native speakers, on their home ground if possible."

Dr. Frederick D. Eddy (University of Colorado - Boulder, Colorado):

"1. Language houses, tables, and plays - effectively run, integrated with the Department's program.

"2. Equally - or more - effective is provision for and encouragement of <u>residence and study in the foreign country</u>."

Dr. Elton Hocking (Purdue University - Lafayette, Indiana):

"1. Skits and dramatizations.
"2. Folk songs, hit tunes - almost any foreign-language songs.
"3. Foreign-language tables at meals."

Dr. Robert Lado (Georgetown University - Washington, D.C.):

"1. Putting on a play within the capabilities of the class.
"2. Learning songs in a language club and holding a contest of some kind.
"3. Seeing good movies in the target language.
"4. Hearing and seeing a travelogue with slides.
"5. Having a reading club with interesting and worthwhile things to read and to discuss."

Dr. Yvone Lenard (University of California - Los Angeles, California):

"Not extracurricular, but I am convinced that student involvement can only be achieved by an active, enthusiastic teacher, who understands his students' interests and gears the class to those interests, who uses the foreign language to speak of what his students <u>know well</u> (themselves, their lives, etc.) and especially makes them speak and write on those subjects. Seeing French plays, movies, etc. and presenting skits or plays in French is, of course, interesting and valuable also."

Dr. Fernand L. Marty (Hollins College - Hollins College, Virginia):

"1. French clubs.
"2. French house.
"3. Radio broadcasts.
"4. Records, films, plays.
"5. French magazines and newspapers."

Dr. Gustave Mathieu (California State College - Fullerton, California):

"1. Tape-Pals.
"2. Production of short skits and plays.
"3. Daily news bulletin in the foreign language produced by rotating student teams.
"4. Planning for travel or study abroad."

Dr. Joseph I. Michel (University of Texas - Austin, Texas):

"1. Foreign-language clubs.
"2. Films.
"3. Play presentation and the learning of songs.
"4. The use of outside speakers from the country or who visit the country.
"5. A visit to the country itself.
"6. The use of radio and television where feasible."

Dr. William G. Moulton (Princeton University - Princeton, New Jersey):

"1. Foreign language houses.
"2. Summer work programs abroad.
"3. Junior year abroad."

Dr. Howard L. Nostrand (University of Washington - Seattle, Washington):

"Individualized, depending on personal interests and surrounding conditions: travel, reading, a college living group (e.g., Deutsches Haus), discussions with visitors from the countries where the language being studied is native. Anthologies and bibliographies of interesting reading are needed, covering fields of student interest."

Dr. Robert L. Politzer (Stanford University - Stanford, California):

"Any kind of activity which motivates the student to learn the language arouses interest in the foreign culture and thus its language (language clubs, contact with representatives of the foreign culture, etc.)."

Dr. Norman P. Sacks (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin):

"1. Language houses, tables, tertulias, etc.
"2. Language clubs.
"3. Informal get-togethers with native speakers of the foreign language.

Dr. Albert Valdman (Indiana University-Bloomington, Indiana):

(Dr. Valdman referred to an evaluative report which he had written entitled The Language Program of the Ferguson-Florissant Schools. The fourteen-page report contained no publication date, but did include material- too long to include in this summary but pertinant to question #35.)

---

36. What specific suggestions do you have for improving modern foreign language instruction? Again, your comments is greatly appreciated.

Note: The suggestion given for question #36 are not broad ones, for similar reason explained in the note to question #35. Hopefully, however, the suggested comments will be helpful to the researcher interested in language methodology. Furthermore, a 16 panel members--rather than a 19 panel are being quoted in the subsequent summary. All 19 respondents replied to question #36; however, only 16 were willing to be quoted, and 3 refused.)

Dr. Theodore Anderson (University of Texas--Austin, Texas):

"1. Educate public and especially professional educators and administrators to an understanding of foreign languages in U.S. education and life.
"2. Earliest possible start in school when proper conditions are possible.
"3. Longest possible sequences--K-12.
"4. Use of native teachers who have been properly oriented.
"5. Foreign student and teacher exchanges, study, and travel.

"6. Much better teacher education programs, using MLA Guidelines."

Miss Violet E. Berquist (University of Illinois, Circle-Campus--Chicago, Illinois):

"1. Start earlier-- it seems to me that this is most urgent.
"2. Improve the quality of the teaching at all levels.
"3. Continue to work on programed or individualized instruction.
"4. Ability grouping provides the necessary challenge for the able student; it also helps the less able."

Dr. Emma M. Birkmaier (University of Mennesota--Minneaposois, Minnesota):

"1. A greater variety of activities.
"2. Use of authentic cultural situations through films.
"3. Get away from literature. Use good twentieth-century literature.
"4. Orient materials to the desires and tastes of the age level the teacher works with.
"5. Correlation with other classes.
"6. Reorient the thinking of the foreign -language teacher and have him take an interest in what students do, and relate the foreign-language class to that."

Dr. Dwight L. Bolinger (Harvard University-Cambridge, Massachusetts):

"1. A closer link between theory and practice.
"2. A decommercialization of textbooks.
"3. A well-funded experimental group with a free hand to try radical ideas.
"4. A motivation for our students--some way to put them from the first in a genuine communicative situation with native speakers."

Dr. Frederick D. Eddy (University of Colorado--Boulder, Colorado):

"Sorry, I don't have six months to answer this question! I can only refer you to the professional literature and to such admirable state-wide foreign-language programs as the one in Indiana. Apparently others are shaping up well: Texas, Washington State, possibly more...."

Dr. Elton Hocking (Purdue University-- Lafayette, Indiana):

"1. Audio-visual (i.e., pictorial) materials, if truly integrated, add much to the learning of language as well as culture. We already have a few such integrated A-V courses (EBF, McGraw-Hill).
"2. Better teacher preparation (pre-service and in-service).
"3. Better facilities for the teacher.
"4. More time for the teacher.
"5. More intelligent use of, and distributed time for, the language lab."

Dr. Rober Lado (Georgetown University--Washington, D.C.):
"1. We need controlled experiments-- very specific ones rather than global ones-- to know more about the great variety of ways to present material. The general labels, 'audio-lingual,' 'grammar-translation," 'cognitive,' 'operant' etc., are woefully unspecific, and hopelessly ambiguous. I attempted more than 40 different ways to teach vocabulary and found significant differences among them although they could all be classified under 'audio-lingual' methods.

Dr. Yvone Lenard (University of California--Los Angeles, California):
"A good question! Fist, imprpve the attitude of some administrators. Let them recognize superior teachers and use those as their guides and advisors. Next, improve teacher trining in universities (you know what improvement that implies). I would want each teacher to ask kimself at any moment of his class; "What are my students learning from what we are doing now? What is the value of that? Is everybody involved and participating actively?'

" I would like to see teachers use their textbooks more critically, and instead of letting the book decide for the class, use it as a help, or adjunct. (By critically, I do not mean that they should spend their time crititicizing it.)"

Dr. Ferdinand L. Marty (Hollinns College-- Hollins College Virginia):
"Cannon put in a small paragraph- is the topic for a whole book which we will publish in December, 1967."

Dr. Gustave Mathieu (California State College-- Fulerton, California):

"1. Material Certificate for Teachers as requiremnt based on a type of MLA test.
"2. Guarantee of study abroad to most good students in their senior-high school or junior college year if they qualify linguistically.
"3. Required-- 'Orientation Sabbatical' every five years for foreign- language teachers."

Dr. Joseph I Mitchel (University of Texas--Austin, Texas):

"The single suggestion for improving the teaching of modern foreign languages is the improvement of teachers. That is producing the individual who is thoroughly competent in the language he is teaching, in knowledge of the culture and the country he is teaching, and who is an effective teacher; that is, who knows the methods, techniques and procedures which will expedite learning and create an interset in the student."

Dr. William G. Moulton (Princeton University-- Princeton, New Jersey):

"We need to work on the teaching of reading skills while at the same time maintaining audio-lingual abiities."

Dr. Howard L. Nostrand (University of Washington-- Seattle, Washington):

"Add knowledge about' to the 'experience of' culture patterns already given-- without taking away from the contact time in the foreign language."

Bibliography

A Selection of Summaries Derived From A Questionnaire On Foreign Language Methodology, by Frieda L. Levinsky, August 1970. From Frost, Bernard E., Theory and Practice Modern Foreign Language. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1967, pp. 201-205.